

# Virginia Degree Completion Network: State Report and Proposal

Developed by George Mason University and Old Dominion University  
September 2015

Language contained in Chapter 665 charged Mason with developing a plan for a comprehensive online course offering in Virginia and to:

- (1) Research similar programs in other states;
- (2) Determine the need for adult completion programs;
- (3) Identify academic programs of interest to non-traditional learners;
- (4) Consider an appropriate scheduling model; and
- (5) Suggest an appropriate pricing model

# Who else is doing this?

- Florida College System – Finish Up, Florida!
- Georgia – Go Back, Move Ahead – Complete College Initiative
- Louisiana – One Degree/Nine Universities
- Rhode Island – College Unbound
- Tennessee Reconnect
- GradTX – 13 Participating Universities
- West Virginia – Degree Now!

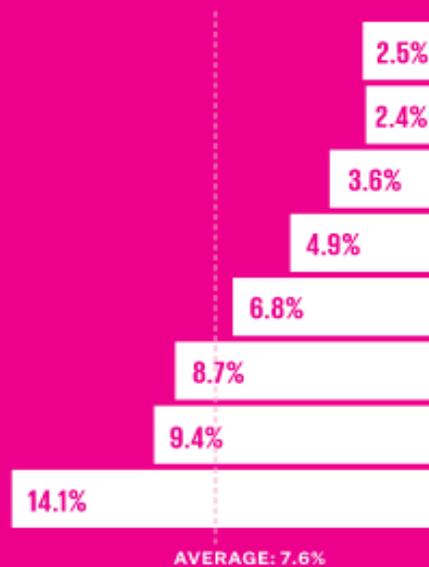
# Why now?

- Over 1 million Virginians with some college education but no degree
- Online landscape rapidly changing
- External pressures – for profits
- Positive impact on quality of life for citizens
- Positive impact on the economy of the Commonwealth

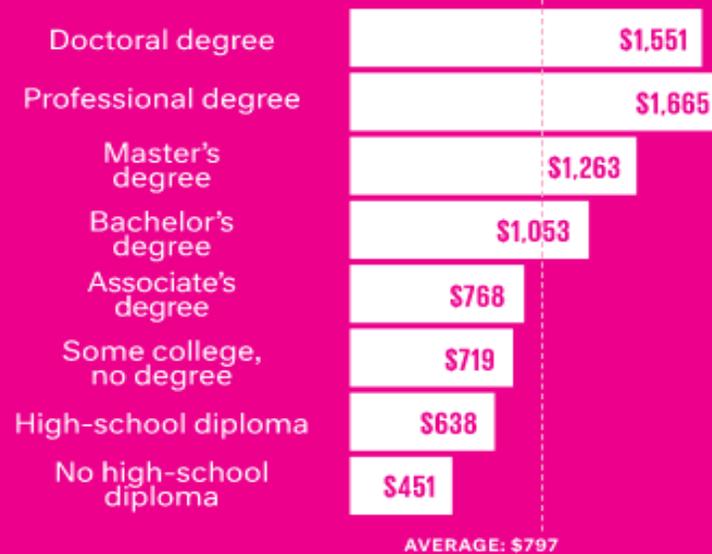
# Return on Investment

4. The economic value of college, meanwhile, is indisputable.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN 2011



MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS IN 2011



(ADULTS AGES 25+)

[http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/myth-student-loan-crisis/309231/?goback=.gde\\_150353\\_member\\_217367090](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/myth-student-loan-crisis/309231/?goback=.gde_150353_member_217367090)

# Why now?

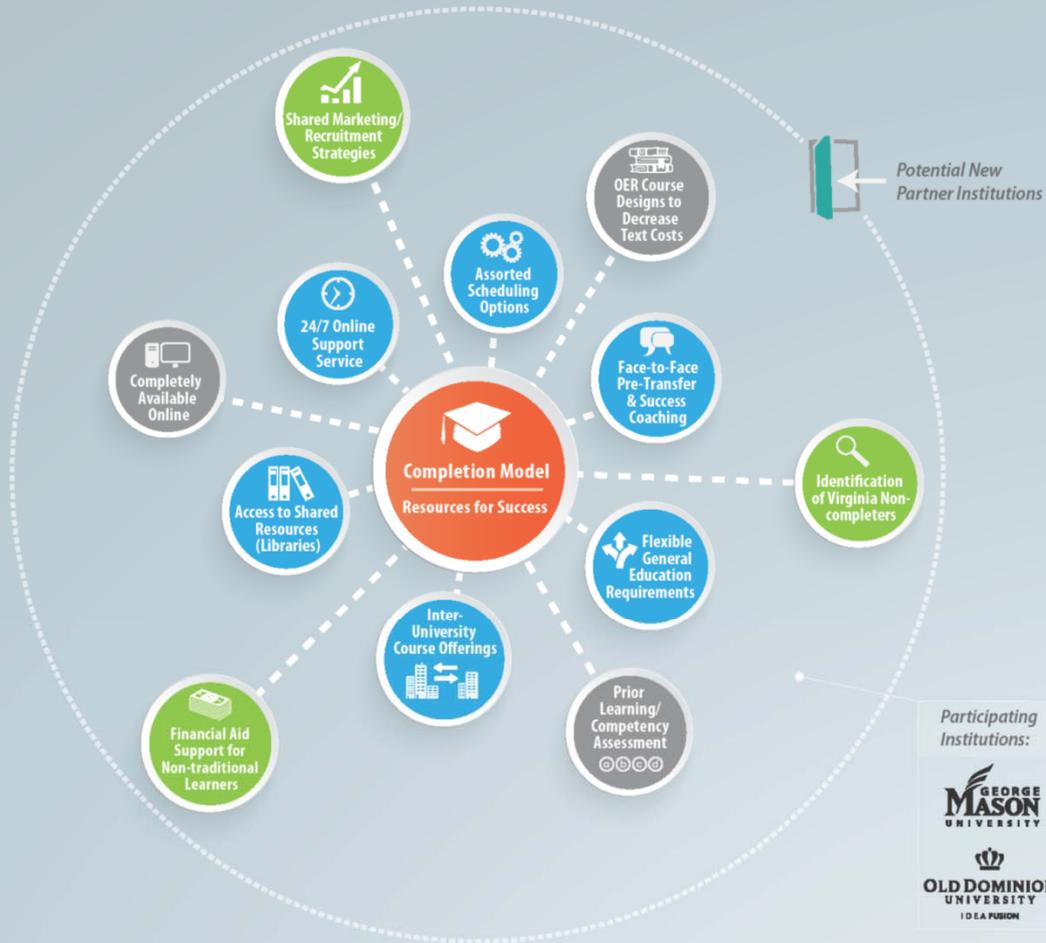
- Mason and ODU long history in serving diverse populations, including non-traditional students (transfers, adult, military-affiliated)
- ODU's long history and expertise in on-line delivery
- Both institutions offer quality online programs in high-demand areas such as business, computer science, engineering technology, and nursing

# Response to the Charge

- Create the Virginia Degree Completion Network (VDCN) to:
  - enhance access and provide adult students a conduit to degree programs across the Commonwealth using a website portal
  - provide advising services and financial aid support
  - offer seamless articulation
  - provide 24/7 access response
  - design comprehensive communication strategy targeting those in need of degree completion

# VIRGINIA DEGREE COMPLETION NETWORK

- Resources to be available to adult students
- Engagement required from participating institutions
- Engagement required from the Commonwealth of Virginia



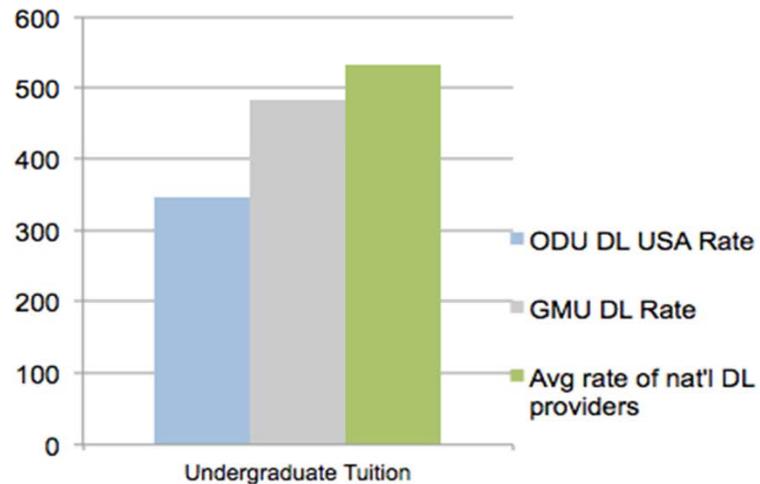
# Requirements for Implementation

- Identify and communicate with potential students
- Establish centralized online systems to connect students from initial interest to enrollment
- Create seamless enrollment between Mason & ODU
- Ensure financial aid is available
- Establish credit for competencies

# ODU and GMU DL Tuition vs. Average Tuition of Major Nat'l DL Providers

Schools included:

- American Intercontinental U.
- Ashford University
- DeVry University
- Excelsior School of Nursing
- Kaplan College
- Northeastern U.
- Penn State World Campus
- Strayer University
- University of Phoenix
- Walden University



# Timeline

## Three phases:

### Phase 1 (prior to state funding) – Fall 2015-Spring 2016

- Create detailed work plan
- Develop cross-institutional agreements
- Provide full budget and governance design

### Phase 2 (dependent on funding) – Summer 2016-Summer 2017

- Select program managers
- Develop portal
- Research and outreach
- Develop marketing plan
- Launch

### Phase 3 – Fall 2017-Fall 2018

- Updates on data collection
- Test seamless infrastructure
- Begin accepting students